

[National Assembly for Wales](#)

[Enterprise and Business Committee](#)

[Inquiry into the future of the Wales and Borders Rail](#)

Evidence from Owen Godfrey - WBF 32

Dear Dr Phipps

Re- Consultation: The future of the Wales and Borders Rail Franchise.

1. As an Anglesey resident and frequent user of train services in Wales, I would like to draw the Committee's attention to the services between Holyhead and Birmingham. At present the trains on this route are extremely slow. Thanks to the circuitous route (in and out of Chester - often with a wait of 10-15 minutes there - then the lengthy detour via Wrexham and Shrewsbury, with a further wait at Shrewsbury to attach to another train) and the many stops, it can take nearly 3 ½ hours to get from Bangor to Birmingham by 'direct' train; longer than it takes to get from Bangor to London. In practice the trains often fail to keep even to this extremely generous timetable. (To show what is possible, there is a single Virgin train from Birmingham early in the morning that reaches Bangor in a mere 2 hours 19 minutes.) It is usually slightly quicker to travel via Crewe and change there, but connections are poor - you often end up waiting for half an hour or more. In any case advance tickets tend to be only available for the slow route via Shrewsbury.

2. At present overcrowding is also a serious problem on this route - particularly in the evenings and at weekends - largely thanks to Arriva's insistence on using short 2-3 carriage trains.

3. On a route of this importance - between a major ferry port and Britain's second-largest city - this service is not nearly good enough. In my view any new franchise should undoubtedly include direct trains from North Wales to Birmingham via Crewe.

Regards

Owen Godfrey